

Information for Fellows with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities are leaders across the globe. The Mandela Washington Fellowship is committed to ensuring that Africa's young leaders with disabilities are able to fully participate in the Fellowship through reasonable accommodation and support. The Fellowship's disability support complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities to fully participate in American life. While the Fellowship provides appropriate resources to ensure Fellows are able to participate in the program, the support services or accommodations may not be the same as what you are used to at home. You may need to learn how to use new technologies or services, depending on what is available.

General

Q: While I am in the U.S., will I have access to all disability services?

A: You will be provided with reasonable accommodations that provide access to all required activities of the Fellowship.

Q: What access to medical care will I have? Can I get medication if I need it?

A: All Fellows will have access to health benefits during their stay in the U.S. through the Department of State's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) (<https://www2.sevencorners.com/usdos/>). Please note that ASPE only covers medical emergencies and does not cover medications for pre-existing conditions. You should plan to bring all your necessary medication for your entire stay in the U.S., as prescription drugs for pre-existing medical conditions will be your responsibility and may be very expensive. Fellows are responsible for all medical costs including required doctor visit copays and any prescribed medications.

Mobility

Q: I have trouble walking for long distances. Will I be provided with assistance?

A: A wheelchair or scooter can be provided for you to use during the Institute if needed.

Q: I currently use a wheelchair but will be unable to bring it with me to the U.S. Will a wheelchair be provided for me?

A: A wheelchair can be provided for you to use during the Institute.

Q: Will classrooms and housing be accessible to me?

A: Your Institute will make accommodations to assure the classroom and residence hall environments fit your needs. Each Institute will have unique accommodations depending on the college or university where you are placed.

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is a program of the U.S. government and supported in its implementation by IREX.



Q: What will the bathroom be like? Is it in the room or down the hall? Is there a tub or a roll-in-shower?

A: If needed, your host university will provide you with an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible room which should meet the reasonable standards for your needs. This may include a bathtub or use of a shower chair either in your room or down the hall depending on the housing set up on campus. Not all Institute housing is able to provide both options, and you may need to learn new methods for accommodations that are not exactly as you are used to in your home.

Q: I will need to purchase medical supplies during my stay in the U.S. Will this be covered by IREX or my Institute?

A: We encourage you to bring enough medical supplies to last you the entirety of your stay in the U.S. If you are unable to bring enough supplies, you can make purchases at local medical supply stores. All costs are the responsibility of the Fellow. Please be aware that available medical supplies may differ from those available in your home country and that prices may vary from what you are accustomed to in your home country. You can check online vendors or communicate with your hosts if you will need to obtain a specific supply during your stay.

Q: I will require assistance to help with housework, such as laundry and cleaning. Will this be provided?

A: Fellows are expected to take care of their own personal needs such as light housework, laundry, and sometimes cooking, if this is an option. Maid service is not typically provided during the program. If you have a disability that creates challenges in handling these tasks, assistance will be provided to enable you to do these things as independently as possible. Laundry machines will be available to machine-wash and dry clothing, and cleaning supplies for your apartment or dormitory-style housing can be purchased near campus.

Q: I have a personal aide. Can they come? What will be provided for them?

A: Please talk with your U.S. Embassy contact if you are selected and believe you may need a personal aide during the program. Please note, personal aides are only provided in cases where you require assistance with personal care such as using the bathroom/bathing/etc. In some cases, aides will be provided upon your arrival, and in other cases the program will allow your personal aide to accompany you. If it is determined that an aide will accompany you, their travel, housing, and meal expenses will be covered by the Fellowship, but the program will not be able to compensate them beyond that.

Q: How much walking will I have to do?

A: During your time at your Institute, there will be a lot of walking around campus (getting to class, dining hall, etc.). And while you may have transportation to many of your site visits, community service, etc., there will still be a lot of walking. If you feel uncomfortable standing or walking for long periods of time, and typically use a wheelchair or electric scooter at home, we suggest you bring your device with you. If you are unable to bring one from home, a wheelchair or electric scooter can be provided for you to use during your Institute.

Q: How will I get to places off campus?

A: For many Institute-sponsored events, transportation will be provided. During your free time, Fellows are responsible for getting around on their own, but should find that most public transportation in the U.S. is



accessible. Please discuss with your university what type of transportation is available for Fellows on campus and in the local community.

Vision

Q: I am visually impaired. Will I have someone to assist me during my time in the U.S.?

A: A sighted guide will be available to you during the first few days of your arrival at your Institute. They will get you acquainted to your new surroundings and help you learn how to navigate the campus safely and independently. Guides will not be provided for the entire Institute.

Q: I use braille to read documents. Will materials be provided to me in braille?

A: Please notify IREX and your host university if you would like materials provided in braille, and we will make our best efforts to provide as many materials as possible in braille. When braille translation is not possible, materials will be provided for you electronically. Please be aware that a contracted form of braille is commonly used in the U.S.

Q: I use JAWS software on my computer to read documents but will be unable to bring my computer. Will the software be provided for me?

A: If you need to use JAWS during the Institute and you cannot bring your personal computer, your Institute can provide you with a computer that has the appropriate software for you to use during your stay. It may be different from what you use at home, so training can be provided.

Q: I use a voice/braille recorder to take notes during class. Will a recorder be provided for me?

A: If you require the use of a recorder, please bring the recorder you typically use. If you are not able to bring one with you, one can be provided for you to use during your stay. It may be different from what you use at home, so training can be provided.

Q: I have low vision, and it is difficult to read documents in small print. Can materials be printed for me using large font?

A: Materials can be provided to you in a larger print if needed. Please let your host university know of this request as soon as possible, prior to your arrival on campus, so they can make the necessary arrangements. When large print is not possible, materials will be provided for you electronically.

Q: How will I get to places off campus?

A: For many Institute-sponsored events, transportation will be provided. During your free time, Fellows are responsible for getting around on their own, but should find that most public transportation in the USA is accessible. Please discuss with your Institute what type of transportation is available in your local community.

Q: What type of telephone will be provided for me? Will it be a smartphone?

A: The standard phones provided during the Fellowship are not smartphones. If you need a smartphone to accommodate a visual or hearing disability, please bring the smartphone you use at home so that you may use



the Fellowship provided SIM card in your own phone. If you do not have one, a basic smartphone can be loaned to you to use during the Institute.

Q: I have never traveled on an international flight before. Will someone be there to assist me?

A: We will contact your airline prior to your arrival to the U.S. They will be able to assist you while you travel.

Hearing & Communication

Q: Will I be provided with a sign language interpreter? Will they be available 24 hours a day?

A: Interpreters will be provided for programmatic activities, not full time. Interpreters will not be available after hours or during free time. A tablet can be loaned to you to use during your Fellowship to help you communicate with non-signing peers during your free time. It may be different from what you use at home, so training can be provided.

Q: Will my interpreter learn my language, or do I need to learn American Sign Language (ASL)?

A: We will do our best to locate an interpreter that best fits your needs. However, please note that there may not be interpreters that sign your language in your host university community. As per the application, ASL may be the only language available for interpretation during your Fellowship. Please notify IREX as soon as possible if you would like us to help you identify support in your home country to become more familiar with ASL prior to your Fellowship. Please also speak with the U.S. Embassy about ASL training prior to your arrival.

Q: I use a tablet to communicate with my peers. Will a tablet be provided for me?

A: If you typically use a personal tablet, please bring it with you. If you are not able to do so, a tablet can be provided on loan to use during your Institute. It may be different from what you use at home, so training can be provided.

Q: What type of telephone will be provided for me? Will it be a smartphone?

A: The standard phones provided during the Fellowship are not smartphones. If you need a smartphone to accommodate a visual or hearing disability, please bring the one you use at home so that you may use the Fellowship provided SIM card in your own phone. If you do not have one, a basic smartphone can be loaned to you to use during the Institute.

Additional Resources

Video interview with Mandela Washington Fellow Hilda Muluh Bih (captions available)

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/story/hilda>

Getting What You Need in the U.S.

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/disabilityneeds>

Disability Organizations in the U.S.

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/organizations>

Top 10 Disability Resources On-Campus

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/campusresources>

Your Rights and Responsibilities

<http://www.miusa.org/resource/tipsheet/rightsresponsibilities>